

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 266786 ACTION SOFIA INFO ROME DTD 29 OCT 76.

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TAGS: CASC, PFOR, AL

SUBJECT: AMERICAN CITIZENS IN ALBANIA - JAMES LITSIKAS
AND THOMAS SOTER

1. DEPARTMENT REQUESTS THAT A USUN OFFICER INFORMALLY
APPROACH UN DELEGATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
ALBANIA RE THE STATUS OF TWO ALBANIAN BORN NATURALIZED
U.S. CITIZENS NOW REPORTED TO BE IN ALBANIA AND UNABLE
TO LEAVE. SUBJECTS ARE:

(A) JAMES LITSIKAS, ABOUT 76 YEARS OLD, A U.S. CITIZEN
IN 1919. LITSIKAS WENT TO ALBANIA IN 1971 FOR A PLANNED
TWO-WEEK VISIT AFTER OBTAINING A VISA FROM THE ALBANIAN
EMBASSY IN ROME. HE HAS SINCE BEEN UNABLE TO LEAVE
ALBANIA. ACCORDING TO LETTERS WHICH HIS FAMILY HAS
RECEIVED IN AN ERRATIC CORRESPONDENCE, THE AUTHORITIES
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HAVE DEMANDED PROOF THAT HE HAS A DAUGHTER IN THE U.S. HE WAS ABLE, WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY, TO PROVIDE HER BIRTH CERTIFICATE BUT IT RESULTED IN NO CHANGE IN HIS PREDICAMENT. HE HAS AN AMERICAN PASSPORT WHICH WAS DUE TO EXPIRE THIS YEAR. HE WAS BRIEFLY HOSPITALIZED EARLIER THIS YEAR.

(B) THOMAS SOTER WAS BORN ON FEBRUARY 22, 1920 IN VITHUK, ALBANIA. HIS FAMILY REPORTS THAT HE WAS NATURALIZED AS A MINOR, DATE UNKNOWN. IN LATE SEPTEMBER 1975 HE OBTAINED A 45 DAY VISITOR'S VISA IN US PASSPORT FROM THE ALBANIAN EMBASSY IN ROME AND PLANNED TO VISIT HIS UNCLE, JOSIF STRATTI, IN KORCE. THE FAMILY HAS RECEIVED NO COMMUNICATION FROM HIM SINCE HIS DEPARTURE FROM ROME.

2. DEPARTMENT HAS PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS AN EMBASSY IN ALBANIA. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IN TIRANA DECIDED NOT TO RAISE THE TWO CASES. HE BELIEVED THAT IT COULD SERVE NO USEFUL PURPOSE IN LIGHT OF THE BRUSQUE RESPONSE HE HAD RECEIVED TO HIS ATTEMPTS TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF AN IMPRISONED ITALIAN CITIZEN, AND BECAUSE THE GOI DOES NOT OFFICIALLY REPRESENT U.S. INTERESTS IN ALBANIA. OUR EMBASSY IN ROME SUGGESTED THAT WE CONSIDER APPROACHING THE ALBANIAN ETHNIC ASSOCIATION IN MASSACHUSETTS, BUT THE FAMILY OF JAMES LITSIKAS HAS ALREADY FAILED IN AN ATTEMPT TO WORK THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION. OUR ONLY RECOURSE THEREFORE IS TO CONTACT THE ALBANIAN MISSION TO THE UN.

3. WE BELIEVE THE APPROACH SHOULD BE MADE ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, CITING THE DESIRE OF THE FAMILIES TO HAVE THESE PERSONS RETURN TO THE U.S. AND THEIR INABILITY TO FIND OUT WHY THEY HAVE NOT RETURNED. POOR COMMUNICATIONS WITH LITSIKAS AND NO WORD AT ALL FROM SOTER SHOULD BE MENTIONED AS CAUSE FOR CONCERN ABOUT THEIR WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS. WE WOULD APPRECIATE A FULL REPORT ON USUN'S EFFORTS. KISSINGERUNQTE KISSINGER

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